Call for applications
A Regional Training Centre (RTC) supported by
the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR) in the WHO Western Pacific Region (WPR)

Submission deadline: 22 April 2020

PURPOSE OF THE CALL
In line with health research needs identified by both the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) and the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR), this call aims to identify a regional training centre in the Western Pacific Region (list of countries is available at https://www.who.int/westernpacific).

The role of this regional training centre is to progressively integrate, over an initial period of 12 months, the package of skills-building courses on implementation research (IR) in their training programmes and later disseminate them among other relevant institutions in the region. The package of skills-building courses developed by TDR comprises: the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), Basic Principles in IR, TDR IR Toolkit and Ethics in IR.

BACKGROUND
Health research is increasingly seen as critical for the contribution of improved health to poverty alleviation and for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and Universal Health Coverage. Low and middle-income countries (LMICs) need to play a major role in research and priority-setting to ensure relevance, sustainability and optimal health impact for the poor.

The main area of work of TDR is Implementation Research (IR), which is the systematic approach to understanding and addressing barriers to effective and quality implementation of health interventions, strategies and policies. Although the research capacity in LMICs has grown over the last few decades, there is still a need for further capacity in IR.

Because TDR supports a regional approach to strengthen national research that improves the health care of the poorest, five Regional Training Centres (RTCs) have been operating in:

- Region of the Americas (AMR): Centro Internacional de Entrenamiento e Investigaciones Médicas (CIDEIM), Cali, Colombia (training expertise in research project management)
- African Region (AFR): School of Public Health, University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana (training expertise in social science and implementation research)
- European Region (EUR): Astana Medical University (AMU), Astana, Kazakhstan (training expertise in bioethics)
- Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR): The Institute Pasteur of Tunis, Tunis; Tunisia (training experience in implementation research and GCP)
- South-East Asia Region (SEAR): Gadjah Mada University (GMU), Yogyakarta, Indonesia (training expertise in social science and implementation research)
In addition, TDR supported a RTC in the Western Pacific region. However, this support has now concluded, and TDR is now seeking applications to select an institution that will be designated as a new RTC supported by TDR in this region.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL TRAINING CENTRE SUPPORTED BY TDR IN WHO/WPR

The objective is to develop effective and efficient engagement and leadership of health researchers from countries of the WPR with a focus on implementation research on infectious diseases of poverty (IDPs).

Specific long-term goals are to:

- Increase the ability of public health researchers and officers in disease endemic countries to access grants and improve research quality and competitiveness through building relevant skills set in organizing, managing and conducting health research.
- Participate in a global network of training centres with high-quality training courses that: (a) collaborate with other health research institutions, including public health research institutions and stakeholders; (b) exchange experiences and innovative approaches to ensure sustainable capacity development; and (c) operate as a place for leveraging activities for preventing and controlling IDPs.

Responsibilities of the training centre include:

- Lead the quality assurance of training programmes through an inter-regional network approach;
- Act as a resource centre for TDR research training activities and support the organization of inter-country meetings or workshops in relation to TDR activities, if needed.

TDR COLLABORATION

In 2020, TDR will provide a contract of technical and financial support initially to cover the period of January 2021 - December 2021 (a total of 12 months) to develop a RTC selected among academic and research institutions in countries of the WHO Western Pacific Region. The contract is renewable every two years upon approval of technical and financial reports by the TDR governance committees.

The proposed activities should be in line with research priorities identified by TDR in conjunction with WHO/WPR. TDR’s initial support should help the institution to become more effective and sustainable through enhanced collaborations and partnerships.

The main activities include the following:

- Integrating at least two of the short courses on Implementation Research included in the TDR package of training courses (Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), Basic Principles in IR course, IR Toolkit and Ethics in IR training course) into the institution’s existing teaching/training programmes;
- Planning and initiating development, sustainability and the dissemination of the training programmes to satellite centres within the region;
- Monitoring and evaluating its training activities;
- Participating in (and contributing to the organization of) the meeting of the RTCs network;
- Initiating networking activities with the other RTCs supported by TDR in the WHO regions.
SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection will be done in close collaboration with WHO/WPRO. A committee of external experts will review eligible applications and recommend an institution to TDR for funding.

Candidate institutions are expected to:

- Be national institutions with experience on Implementation Research (IR) relevant to TDR activities with the ability to liaise with national/regional stakeholders to identify, address and respond to IR needs;
- Be affiliated with a recognized university in one of the member states in WHO/WPR;
- Show potential in leading capacity strengthening in IR with the capability to design and deliver training activities adapted to the local and regional context;
- Have explicit commitment from the head of the institution, as well as the relevant ministry of health or ministry of education;
- Have the adequate infrastructural conference facilities that are conducive for learning with technologies including access to high speed internet, video conferencing, computers, IT support;
- Have adequate and relevant human resources who can support the training activities and related initiatives such as the mentorship capacity to develop future trainers;
- Be able to assess learning of trainees and to evaluate the effectiveness of the training programme;
- Have experience in research involving national and international partnerships;
- Have a sustainability strategy for promotion of continued education/training, including specific plans for institutionalization of the IR training programmes;
- Have a strong advocacy and communications strategy for promotion and wider dissemination of training activities;
- Have well-established and adequate governance, accounting and administrative systems for quality assurance of training management and delivery.
- Not required but assets that will be valued in the selection:
  - Membership in an existing functional network to disseminate the different courses.
  - Ability to work, collaborate and manage the network in English and have the capacity to generate written materials, provide technical support and training (orally or in written format) in another WHO official language.
  - Ability to leverage funds to scale up training activities.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Interested candidate institutions are invited to send a complete proposal in an electronic format (WORD or PDF) including all the required documentation in one file by email to rcstdr@who.int by 22 April 2020 (no application form is required).

The email subject line must include "RTC [institution name]".
The proposal should include:

1. Title and full name of the institution and the main contact person for this project (project coordinator), with full contact details.

2. A description of the institution mandate, structure, missions, collaborations and infrastructure (see the earlier section on selection criteria) (*maximum 2 pages*).

3. An outline of the institution’s experience in running training programmes at national/regional and international levels. The proposal should list the major training programmes carried out during the last 5 years and provide the curriculum of courses. Potential partners, the number of participants, the evaluation system and the timetable for the training activities in 2021 should also be provided in quarter 4 of 2020. (*maximum 3 pages*).

4. A project plan (*maximum 3 pages*), including a description of how:
   a. becoming a TDR RTC would fit with the mission of the institution;
   b. the RTC would develop and disseminate the training programmes to other research institutions in the region;
   c. the RTC would become self-sustainable.

5. The details of staff who will be involved in the training activities and are interested in the initiative (including the project coordinator). The curriculum vitae of each person and their potential role in the initiative should be made clear.

6. The budget in US dollars (maximum of US$ 60,000) for an initial 12-month period.

7. Letters of support from the head of the institution, and the relevant ministry of health and ministry of education.

TDR will acknowledge receipt by email of applications within 2 weeks after the submission deadline. Applicants who do not receive an acknowledgement within the specified time should contact Dr Pascal Launois at <launoisp@who.int>. An acknowledgement of receipt does not imply that the application is eligible for review.

For further information, please contact:
Dr Pascal Launois
Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR)
World Health Organization, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland
http://www.who.int/tdr/
Telephone: +41-22 791-2659
E-mail: launoisp@who.int